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Prepare Now: Mandatory Watering Restrictions Likely This Summer

*North Texas Municipal Water District to begin "Water IQ" Campaign
offering drought-survival tips for landscapes*

(WYLIE, Texas) – If the drought persists as expected, more than 60 cities in the North Texas Municipal Water District's (NTMWD) service area will likely face mandatory outdoor watering restrictions by summer.

Lake Lavon, located northeast of Dallas, is about 8 feet below normal and dropping—a concern for hundreds of thousands of households and businesses that rely on Lavon as their primary source of water. Another major concern is the continued availability of water from Lake Texoma and Lake Chapman. These reservoirs are complementary sources of water for NTMWD, and there are limits to the amount of water that can be taken from these lakes.

"Despite the ongoing drought, the demand for water between August and February was 30 percent greater than the same period a year before," said Jim Parks, executive director of the North Texas Municipal Water District. "We're now heading toward summer and the demand for water will be even higher. We need to protect our limited water source and that's why the North Texas Municipal Water District is launching a water awareness public education campaign called Water IQ."

NTMWD serves more than 1.5 million people in 60 cities in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Based in Wylie (northeast of Dallas in Collin County), NTMWD is a regional water wholesaler to cities in six counties: Collin, Dallas, Denton, Hunt, Kaufman, and Rockwall.

North Texas Drought

In January, NTMWD initiated Stage 2 drought conditions, which are considered moderate, and called for voluntary conservation measures for consumers and businesses. A Stage 3 severe drought is likely by summer and will require mandatory water restrictions including a ban on watering between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. and a limit on landscape watering to an inch once every week. Some NTMWD cities plan to hire additional staff to help enforce the mandatory restrictions and ensure customers are in compliance.

"Most of these restrictions make sense with or without a drought," said Parks. "Watering once a week makes for a healthier lawn and root system, and not watering during the heat of the day prevents evaporation and scorching your lawn."

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Water-Saving Tips

NTMWD is providing tips on preparing your lawn now for the likelihood of a hot and dry summer.

- Start preparing your lawn now for less watering later. Slowly cut back to watering your lawn about 1 inch every week. Limiting watering to an inch every seven days will likely be mandatory by summer.
- Refrain from hosing non-pervious surfaces like driveways and sidewalks, and repair broken sprinkler heads so you're watering your lawn, not the street or your home.
- If you plan to install new landscaping, prepare your beds now with plenty of mulch. Experts from the Texas Nursery and Landscape Association recommend 4 to 6 inches. Mulch prevents evaporation and keeps soil moist.
- If you install plants, choose "water-wise" varieties like lantana, salvia and Mexican sage. Ask your local nursery, home improvement retailer or landscape professional for more information.
- Raise your lawnmower blade and cut grass to a height of 3 inches—this shades the soil, reducing evaporation, and allows roots to grow deeper.

Water IQ: Know Your Water

Research by the Texas Water Development Board indicates nearly three out of four Texans don't know the natural source of their water. However, the more people know about their water resources, the more likely they are to save it.

That's why the North Texas Municipal Water District is beginning a water awareness public education campaign this month called: "Water IQ: Know Your Water." The Water IQ campaign is helping North Texans learn more about their water and how easy it is to save it.

The Water IQ campaign will use advertising, media relations and outreach. Local radio and newspapers are running fun trivia quizzes, challenging audiences to test their knowledge of water. Later this month, the North Texas Municipal Water District will air television public service announcements and roll out an educational outreach road tour. The Water IQ tour will travel to various North Texas communities with knowledgeable experts on hand to help people learn more about saving water through trivia, demonstrations and games.

The North Texas Municipal Water District is the first in Texas to implement the "Water IQ: Know Your Water" campaign, which was developed for the Texas Water Development Board.

Visit www.WaterIQ.org to learn more about the "Water IQ: Know Your Water" campaign.

About the North Texas Municipal Water District

NTMWD serves the following cities and/or water supply agencies: Allen, Farmersville, Forney, Frisco, Garland, Mesquite, McKinney, Plano, Princeton, Richardson, Royse City, Rockwall, Wylie, Caddo Basin S.U.D., Cash S.U.D., College Mound W.S.C., Copeville W.S.C., Crandall, East Fork S.U.D., Fairview, Fate, Forney Lake W.S.C., Gastonia-Scurry W.S.C., Josephine Kaufman, Kaufman Four-One, Lavon W.S.C., Little Elm, Lucas, Melissa, Milligan W.S.C., Mt. Zion W.S.C., Murphy, Nevada W.S.C., North Collin W.S.C., Parker, Prosper, Rose Hill W.S.C., Rowlett, Sachse, Seis Lagos M.U.D., Sunnyvale, Wylie Northeast W.S.C.

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